

**Post Office Cottage, The Street,
Wenhaston, Suffolk**

Planning application: C/11/2335

HER Ref: WMH 037

Archaeological Monitoring Report

(© John Newman BA MIFA, 2 Pearsons Place, Henley, Ipswich, IP6 0RA)

(November 2012)

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Site details for HER

Name: Garden of Post Office Cottage, The Street, Wenhaston, Suffolk, IP19 9DP

Client: Dr & Mrs W Harvey

Local planning authority: Suffolk Coastal DC

Planning application ref: C/11/2335

Development: Erection of new dwelling

Date of fieldwork: 25 & 27 September & 22 October, 2012

HER Ref: WMH 037

OASIS: johnnewm1-136509

Grid ref: TM 4242 7563

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Summary: Wenhaston, Post Office Cottage, The Street (WMH 037, TM 4242 7563) monitoring of foundation trenches for a new dwelling and an associated large retaining wall in the back garden of Post Office Cottage recorded a substantial depth of overburden. At its greatest exposed extent the overburden was nearly 2m deep and while finds were scarce in the upcast spoil close to the base of the trenching two small and abraded fragments of earlier Post medieval tile were recovered. While no archaeological features were revealed during the ground works some interesting land use history was recorded as at the base of the overburden indications of an original heath type land surface could be seen with characteristic heavy iron panning in places (John Newman Archaeological Services for Dr & Mrs W Harvey).

1. Introduction & background

1.1 Dr & Mrs W Harvey commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of ground works required under a condition for a programme of archaeological works of the planning decision notice for application C/11/2335. The monitoring requirements were set out in a Brief set by Dr A Antrobus of the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service to satisfy this condition and in response JNAS produced the relevant Written Scheme of Investigation (see Appendix II) in order that conditional discharge could be gained from the LPA and ground works commence on site. This development concerns the erection of a new dwelling in the back garden of Post Office Cottage, The Street, Wenhaston (see Fig. 1) and the construction of a substantial retaining wall along the rear boundary of the property.

1.2 Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet parish is located between Halesworth and Blythburgh on the southern side of the River Blyth in north-east Suffolk. The village of Wenhaston lies just below the 20m OD contour on the crest of the slope above the floodplain of the River Blyth whose now canalised channel runs 750m to the north. The Street forms the main road in the village both now and historically and Post Office Cottage fronts onto this with the new house site being in the rear garden with Back Road immediately behind. The parish church (HER WMH 010) lies 180m to the south and while Post Office Cottage, a much altered and extended building of 17th/18th century origin, is not a listed structure St Kilda and Oakwood, which lie immediately to the north, are both listed buildings of late 16th/early 17th century date (see Fig. 2). Soils in the area are generally light and well drained being derived from the underlying glaciofluvial sand and gravel deposits. While the site for the new house was partly soft ground the western half of the footprint area had previously been disturbed for the creation of a swimming pool. However at least 60% of the new build area was undisturbed prior to works starting and further, related, ground works were also required for the construction of a large retaining wall along the rear boundary of Post Office Cottage and the new house.

2. Monitoring methodology

2.1 Three visits were made to the site to observe the excavation of the foundations for the large retaining wall and new house as they progressed using a medium sized 360 machine equipped with a 700mm wide toothed bucket on bright, sunny days with site visibility good at all times. The foundation trenches were entered where safe to allow for closer inspection of the exposed soil profiles and hand cleaning of indistinct areas; however the south-eastern corner of the house footprint was too deep and unstable to inspect at close quarters. Upcast spoil was stockpiled nearby allowing for a close inspection for stray finds. The foundations were recorded in relation to nearby mapped features and a small number of digital images were taken in order to record the monitoring (see Appendix I).

3. Results

3.1 In total nearly 23m of 1000mm to 1200mm wide foundation trench for the retaining wall along the rear, western, boundary to the site and some 54m of 700mm wide trench for the new house were monitored (see Fig. 2).

3.2 To the rear of the garden to Post Office Cottage the ground level along the surface of Back Road is some 1800mm above the level of the garden and therefore the initial ground works were for a substantial retaining wall. As noted in section 3.1 above this wall required a wide foundation which varied between 1000mm at its southern end and 1200mm at the northern end. The deposit profile exposed by this trench, whose base was c3.50m below that of Back Road above, was made up of 400/500mm of topsoil over 1400/1500mm of a mid brown sandy subsoil which contained occasional small flints and small brick or tile fragments. Below the subsoil layer a thin, 30mm/50mm thick, deposit consisting of a possible buried and fragmented former dark brown sandy remnant heath type soil was evident. This possible buried soil remnant in turn lay over 500mm of a banded very pale brown and darker brown fine sand deposit which lay over 300mm of a very pale grey sand. The locally occurring glaciofluvial deposits exposed at the base of the trench proved to be orange sand with small flints.

3.3 The 54m of foundation trench for the new house also proved to be deep with a total depth of up to 1700mm again with 400/500mm of topsoil over 1100/1200mm of a uniform mid brown sandy subsoil with the swimming pool that formerly occupied part of the site sunk into this material. Across the footprint the naturally occurring orange sand with small flints noted above continued and in places a dark brown iron pan type deposit was noted at the interface between the subsoil and the orange sand. The subsoil in general was clean with very few finds noted in the trench sides or in the upcast spoil. However three pottery sherds (0001) were recovered from a depth of 400/500mm in the eastern foundation trench and two small fragments of brick/tile (0002) were also found at different points in the trench sides but at a similar depth of 1400/1500mm (see section 4 below).

4. The Finds

4.1 As noted above a small number of finds were recovered from the subsoil and the full report by Sue Anderson is included as Appendix III below. In summary the three sherds (0001) were from the same vessel and of 16th to 18th century date so possibly to be associated with Post Office Cottage in its earlier phases of use. The two fragments of brick or tile (0002) are small and abraded but in all likelihood both are of earlier Post medieval date though one could be of Roman date.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The great depth of overburden revealed at this site was unexpected as the local topography does not suggest major landscaping in the past though Back Road to the rear of the property is at a higher level. While some 1700mm of top and subsoil was found to lie above the locally occurring sands and gravel with small fragments of early Post medieval brick or tile at a depth of 1400/1500mm the area does not appear to have been used for quarrying. That traces of a buried heath type land surface were also revealed close to the base of the trenches also points to the depositing of material onto this original land surface perhaps to level up the local area before the earliest parts of Post Office Cottage were built in the 17th/18th century period. Below the remnants of the buried heath type surface in the retaining wall trench the banded sands are likely to be the product of wind-blown deposits under periglacial conditions when there was little vegetation cover. Finally it can be

suggested that the expansion of Wenhaston into this part of the village was of 16th/17th century, and later, date.

5.2 In conclusion it is clear that the extent of the monitored footings has had little effect on any archaeology of significance though an interesting history for the topography and land use history of the site can be inferred from the a study of the exposed deposits.

(Acknowledgements: JNAS is grateful to everyone on site for their close cooperation in relation to this site monitoring, to Esther Newman for processing the finds and Sue Anderson for her specialist report)

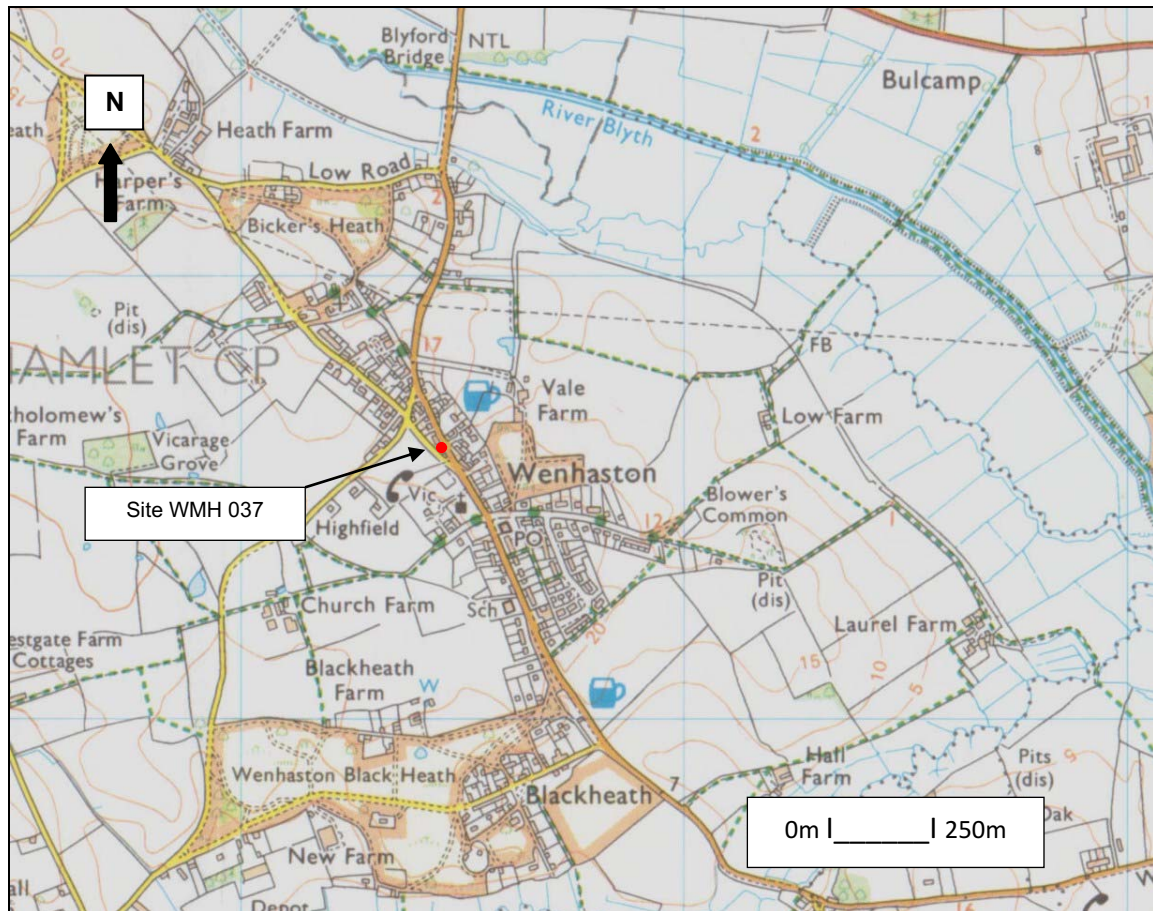


Fig. 1: Site location (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2006
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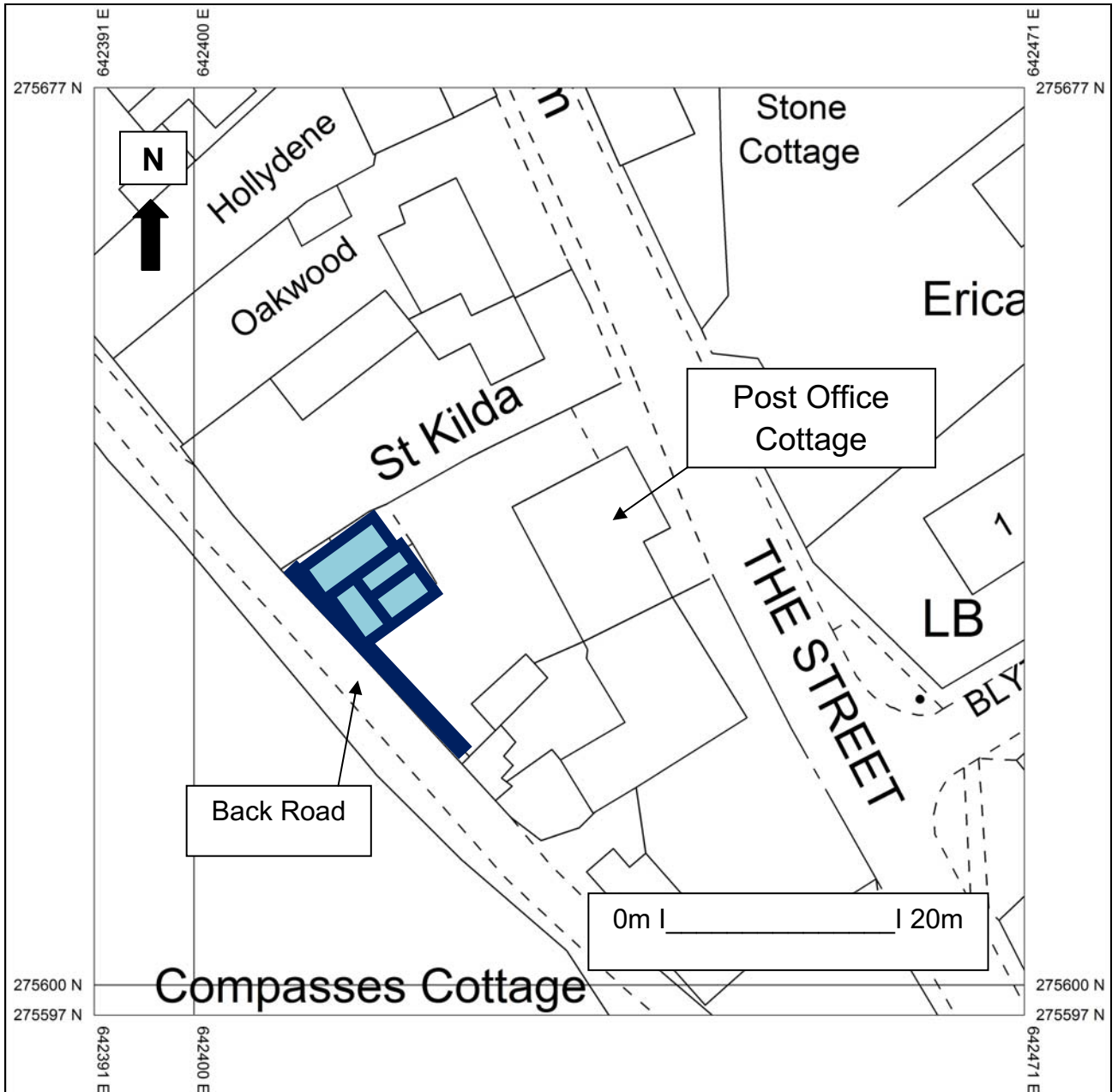
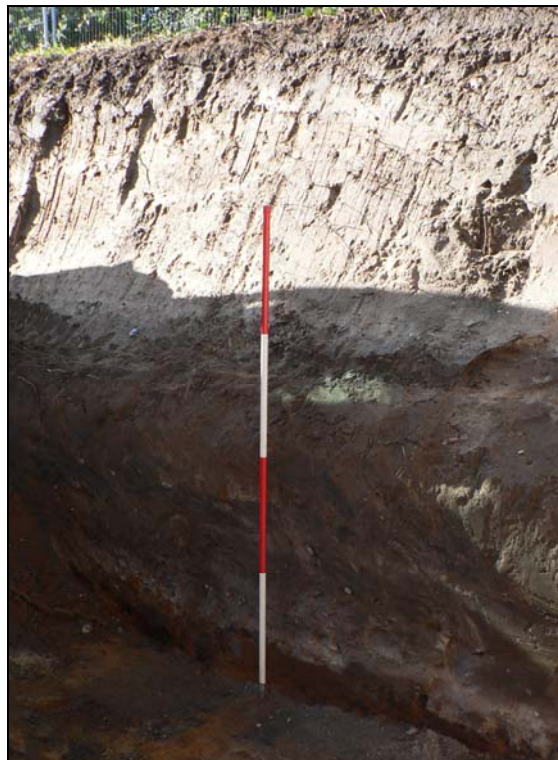


Fig. 2: Monitored foundation trenches (dark blue)
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Appendix I- Images



General view from north-west across footings, Post Office Cottage in background



Exposed deposit profile west side of retaining wall trench



Retaining wall trench- lower deposit detail



Eastern house footing from south



Detail of iron panning at base of subsoil

**Erection of New Dwelling to the Rear of Post
Office Cottage, The Street, Wenhaston, Suffolk**

Planning application: C/11/2335

**Written Scheme of Investigation for
Archaeological Monitoring**

Site details

Name: Part rear garden of Post Office, The Street, Wenhaston, Suffolk, IP19 9DP

Client: Dr & Mrs W Harvey

Local planning authority: Suffolk Coastal DC

Planning application ref: C/11/2335

Proposed development: Erection of one, one & a half storey dwelling

Proposed date for ground works: tbc

Brief ref: SCC Archaeology Brief- Harvey

Grid ref: TM 4243 7562

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Location, Topography & Geology
3. Archaeological & Historical Background
4. Aims of the Site Monitoring
5. Methodology
6. Risk Assessment
7. Specialists

1. Introduction

1.1 Mr W Harvey on behalf of Dr & Mrs W Harvey has commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of ground works required under a condition for a programme of archaeological works of the planning decision notice for application C/11/2335. This written scheme of investigation (WSI) details the background to the archaeological condition and how JNAS will implement the requirements of the Brief set by Dr A Antrobus of the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service to satisfy the condition. The WSI will also set out how potential risks will be mitigated. This proposed development concerns the erection of a one and a half storey dwelling on part of the rear garden of Post Office Cottage, The Street, Wenhaston.

1.2 The monitoring will be carried out to the standards set regionally in the *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (EAA Occ. Papers 14, 2003)* and nationally in *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Institute for Archaeologists 1994, revised 2001)*.

2. Location, Topography & Geology

2.1 Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet parish is located between Halesworth and Blythburgh on the southern side of the River Blyth in north-east Suffolk. The village of Wenhaston lies just below the 20m OD contour on the crest of the slope above the floodplain of the river whose now canalised channel runs 750m to the north. The Street forms the main road the village both now and historically and Post Office Cottage fronts onto this with the proposed development site (PDS) being in the rear garden where it will front onto Back Road. The parish church (HER WMH 010) lies 180m to the south and while Post Office Cottage is not a listed structure St Kilda and Oakwood, which lie immediately to the north, are both listed buildings of late 16th/early 17th century date. Soils in the area are generally light and well drained being derived from the underlying glaciofluvial sand and gravel deposits. At present the PDS is part covered by a shed and swimming pool building and the extent of recently disturbed ground is uncertain though intact ground does exist within the planned footprint area.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 To quote from the relevant Brief:

'The above proposal lies in an area of archaeological interest, less than 200m from the church in the historic core of Wenhaston (County Historic Environment Record WMH 010), as shown particularly on the 1884 OS map. There are 16th century listed buildings in the vicinity. Wenhaston has a rich archaeological resource relating to occupation in the prehistoric, roman and Saxon times, although the extent of settlement in different periods is as yet undefined. There is potential for archaeological evidence relating to historic and early occupation to exist in the development area. Any ground-work associated with the proposed development has the potential to cause significant damage or destruction to any underlying heritage assets.'

3.2 The Brief then confirms that while this development may reveal deposits of archaeological significance this potential disturbance to local heritage assets can be mitigated by their investigation and recording during continuous monitoring of ground works as they progress by an archaeologist with subsequent full reporting.

4. Aims of the Site Monitoring

4.1 As outlined in section 3 above the site lies in a location with high archaeological potential where evidence for earlier, multi-period, activity in addition to medieval and earlier Post medieval period deposits might be revealed and continuous monitoring of ground works as they progress can best investigate and record what may be revealed. This monitoring will aim to record all possible details relating to depth of overburden and any evidence for the character and date of any past activity within the exposed deposits. The primary aim being to gain more information relating to past land use in this location within the historic settlement area of the village and close to multi-period artefact scatters indicative of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon period activity.

5. Methodology

5.1 The construction method to be used on the site will be strip foundations. The excavation of the strip foundations, and related ground works such as for soakaways and service trenches, will be observed as they are excavated and any up cast spoil examined for finds. Notice of ground works starting and then any unexpected findings will be reported back to the relevant Suffolk CC Archaeological Office. Time will be available to hand clean sections as necessary and investigate any possible archaeological deposits within the foundation trenches.

5.2 Site records will be made under a continuous and unique numbering system of archaeological contexts under an overall site HER number

supplied by Suffolk CC. All contexts will be numbered and finds recorded by context. Conventions compatible with the county HER will be used throughout the monitoring. Site plans will be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and sections at 1:10 or 1:20 (all on plastic drawing film) and related to OS map cover with the monitored footings shown. Sections will be levelled to a datum OD. A photographic record of high resolution digital images will be made of the site and exposed features.

5.3 As necessary and to define archaeological deposits exposed surfaces will be trowelled clean before recording. Archaeological deposits will be fully hand investigated and recorded within the constraints of the trench foundations with sections recorded related to the trench sides, if possible, and with levels OD. Even if no archaeological deposits are revealed every effort will be made to gain a record of the natural occurring deposits and overburden that could help in the understanding of the general history of land use and topography in the town. Where appropriate palaeoenvironmental samples will be taken for processing and assessment by a specialist conversant with regional archaeological standards and research agendas if relevant archaeological deposits are revealed. If human burial evidence is revealed the SCC Archaeological Officer will be informed and a Ministry of Justice licence obtained before excavation, recording and removal of the remains which would incur an additional cost. The possibility of modifying the ground work design to leave any such remains in situ will also be examined (the potential of this site to contain burials is assessed as being low).

5.4 All finds will be collected and processed unless any variation is agreed with the relevant SCC Archaeological Officer. Finds will be assessed by recognised period specialists and their interpretation will form an integral part of the overall report. Finds will be stored according to ICON guidelines with specialist advice/treatment sought for fragile ones. Every effort will be made to gain the deposit of the site finds to the SCC Archaeological Store under their relevant HER code and site numbering for future reference. If this is not possible then the SCC Archaeological Officer will be consulted over any requirements for additional recording. Any discard policy will be discussed and agreed with the relevant Archaeological Officer at Suffolk CC.

5.5 An archive of all records and finds will be prepared consistent with the principles in *Management of Archaeological projects* (MAP2) and particularly Appendix 3 and this will be deposited with the Suffolk CC HER within 3 months of working finishing on site under the relevant HER number. As necessary the site digital archive will deposited with the

Archaeology Data Service (ADS) within the agreed allowance for the monitoring and reporting works.

5.6 The monitoring report will be consistent with the principles of MAP2 (particularly Appendix 4) and this report will summarise the methodology employed and relate the archaeological record directly to the level of visibility allowed by the operation of plant given the nature of the underlying natural deposits. The report will also give an objective account of the deposits and stratigraphy recorded and finds recovered with an inventory of the latter. Any interpretation of the monitoring results will be clearly separated from the objective account of the monitoring and its results. The report will give a clear statement regarding the results of the site monitoring in relation to both the more detailed aims in section 2 above and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (EAA Occ. Papers 3, 8 & 24 1997, 2000 & 2011). An unbound draft copy of the report will be presented to the Archaeological Service at Suffolk CC within 3 months of the completion of the site works. Once accepted a bound hard copy will be provided plus another for the County HER, a copy will be sent to the client so they can gain discharge of the relevant condition. The project will be registered on the OASIS online archaeological record followed by submission of the final draft in .pdf format. An HER summary sheet will be completed and a summary prepared of any positive results for inclusion in the annual PSIAH round-up. A dxf type vector plan of the area examined will be supplied for inclusion into the County HER map base.

6. Risk Assessment

6.1 Protective clothing will be worn on site (hard hat, high visibility vest/coat, steel-toe cap boots & ear muffs if required). A safe working method will be agreed with the contractors on site in order to maximise access to disturbed ground and up cast spoil while at the same time allowing efficient use of plant. Suitable clothing will be available to mitigate against extremes of weather.

6.2 Vehicles will be safely parked away from work areas and lines of access.

6.3 Before work on site starts any special requirements regarding potential site contamination will be discussed with the client and any ground test reports examined. Gloves and hand wash/wipes be available and any information on possible ground contamination will be passed to finds and environmental specialists. The potential for services in the area will be discussed with the client and their contractor.

John Newman Archaeological Services

6.4 A fully charged mobile phone will be carried and a first aid kit will be taken to site.

6.5 Deep holes/trenches going below c1.30m will only be entered if assessed to be safe and after consultation with the contractor on site, they will not be entered if no-one else is in the vicinity.

6.6 JNAS holds full insurance cover for archaeological site works from the specialist provider Townergate Risk Solutions covering Public & Products Liability, details can be supplied on request.

7. Specialists

Conservation:	Conservation Services
Faunal remains:	J Curl (Sylvanus Archaeology)
Human remains:	S Anderson (CFA Archaeology)
Palaeoenvironmental samples:	V Fryer (Freelance)
Pre-historic flint:	S Bates (Freelance)
Pre-historic pottery:	S Percival (Freelance)
Post Roman ceramics & CBM:	S Anderson (CFA Archaeology)
Roman period ceramics	S Benfield (CAT)
Post Roman small finds:	JNAS

Appendix III- The Finds

Post Office Cottage, Wenhaston (WMH 037): the ceramic finds

Sue Anderson, CFA Archaeology, November 2012.

Pottery

Three sherds of pottery weighing 243g were collected from a subsoil layer at c.400-500mm depth (0001). All three sherds are part of a larger piece of a single vessel in a fine pale grey fabric with olive green streaky glaze inside and out. Although reduced, this vessel probably belongs to the generic group known as 'glazed red earthenwares' which were produced in East Anglia between the 16th to 18th centuries. The form is uncertain, but the size and profile of this body sherd suggest that it was part of a large storage jar or cistern.

Ceramic building material

Two fragments of CBM (380g) were recovered from subsoil at a depth of 1400-1500mm (0002).

One piece is in a medium sandy poorly mixed streaky fabric containing occasional flint. The base and upper surfaces are present and the thickness is 54mm. This fragment is a piece of a post-medieval 'late brick', the thickness suggesting that it may date to the 16th/17th century.

The other fragment is in a finer, slightly micaceous grog-tempered fabric. One surface shows evidence that it was struck. The other surface appears to be worn, with pieces of grog exposed through attrition or erosion. However, this is uncertain and the surface may be the original base. If so, with a thickness of 40mm this piece could be a Roman tile. On balance, though, the appearance of the stretcher face and the lack of any knife trimming suggests that it is probably part of a post-medieval brick which has been used for flooring.

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OASIS ID: johnnewm1-136509

Project details

Project name	Land at Post Office Cottage, The Street, Wenhaston, Suffolk- Archaeological Monitoring Report
Short description of the project	Wenhaston, Post Office Cottage, The Street (WMH 037, TM 4242 7563) monitoring of foundation trenches for a new dwelling and an associated large retaining wall in the back garden of Post Office Cottage recorded a substantial depth of overburden. At its greatest exposed extent the overburden was nearly 2m deep and while finds were scarce in the upcast spoil close to the base of the trenching two small and abraded fragments of earlier Post medieval tile were recovered. While no archaeological features were revealed during the ground works some interesting land use history was recorded as at the base of the overburden indications of an original heath type land surface could be seen with characteristic heavy iron panning in places.
Project dates	Start: 25-09-2012 End: 22-10-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WMH 037 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK SUFFOLK COASTAL WENHASTON WITH MELLS HAMLET Post Office Cottage, The Street
Postcode	IP19 9DP
Study area	70.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TM 4242 7563 52 1 52 19 28 N 001 33 28 E Point
 Height OD / Depth Min: 17.00m Max: 18.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation John Newman Archaeological Services
 Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
 Project design originator John Newman
 Project director/manager John Newman
 Project supervisor John Newman
 Type of sponsor/funding body Landowner

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Landowner
 Physical Contents "Ceramics"
 Digital Archive recipient Suffolk CC Archaeological Service
 Digital Contents "Ceramics"
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"
 Paper Archive recipient Suffolk CC Archaeological Service
 Paper Contents "Ceramics"
 Paper Media available "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Post Office Cottage, The Street, Wenhaston, Suffolk- Archaeological Monitoring Report
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Newman, J
 Date 2012
 Issuer or publisher John Newman Archaeological Services
 Place of issue or publication Henley, Suffolk
 Description Loose bound client report
 Entered by John Newman (johnnewman2@btinternet.com)
 Entered on 11 November 2012